

**PROBLEM STATEMENT/TARGET POPULATION**

The TAG Drug Task Force is a multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional law enforcement task force. We are a major crimes unit that investigates drug trafficking, pharmaceutical diversion, criminal gangs, firearm trafficking, Human Trafficking and Homeland Security issues. The process to form TAG began shortly after September 11, 2001. TAG consists of Trumbull County Sheriff's Deputies and other local law enforcement officers. We have enlisted the assistance and partnership of federal and state law enforcement agencies as well as medical boards, mental health and recovery organizations, and our local academic community in the pursuit of our mission to reduce crime and overdoses in Trumbull County.

**Our Target Population:** The target population that we serve is Trumbull County, Ohio with a total land area of 637 square miles. According to the 2010 US Census Bureau's report, our total population is 210,312 citizens. The demographic analysis indicates that the median age of our residents is 42 years old, and the racial makeup is 89.0% white, 8.3% black and 2.7% other. We have a high poverty rate, compared to the state as a whole, with 15% of our population below the poverty level and the median household income at \$42,296 per year. There are poor economic conditions (we are part of the Appalachian Regional Commission), several low-income rental properties, and many rural communities within our jurisdiction with smaller law enforcement agencies who depend upon our task force to tackle the drug crimes in their neighborhoods. TAG is the only full time countywide narcotics enforcement agency within Trumbull County.

Trumbull County is positioned uniquely as a flow-through and destination point with several interstate highways used for drug trafficking to and from several major cities such as Cleveland, AKRON Dayton, Toledo, Detroit, Pittsburgh and Chicago. Recently, we have also seen an increase of trafficking from West Virginia.

**Overall Quality of Life Factors:** According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's 2019 County Health Rankings Report, Trumbull County ranks as one of the lowest counties for overall length and quality of life. Among the most influential attributing factors in this ranking, is our county's heavy opiate and other narcotic abuse, which, as you know, causes a snowball of other problems such as declining health and premature deaths (infectious disease and fatal overdoses), increased unemployment (falling into a life of poverty) and crimes acted out by those who use. These factors affect those who use, their families and ultimately degrade the society of our community as a whole.

**Overall Drug Problem Factors:** Trumbull County's overall drug problems are exasperated by those factors indicated above. A critical element of concern is the local dealers in our communities who are linked to larger drug cartels. This link increases the supply of illegal drugs to those dealers and oftentimes the potency may be stronger (leading to more overdose deaths), while also strengthening the dealers' protection and leading to an increase of violence among their "competitors". As you know, this violence effects not only those directly involved, but innocent bystanders as well. This is causing great concern of Trumbull County residents

within our urban communities, who are increasingly expressing to our task force with drug tip information that they are living in fear, their children do not go outside to play and several have and are considering moving out of Trumbull County.

**Legalization of Medicinal Marijuana in our County:** As you know, medicinal marijuana use and dispensing was legalized in Ohio in January, 2019. There is one dispensary operational in our county in the city of Warren, with a neighboring dispensary nearby in Youngstown, OH. According to the Ohio DHS, the average price of an ounce of medicinal marijuana is \$470, which is much higher than most street level dealers. Due to these high costs, TAG is taking into consideration that street level dealing of marijuana may increase in the coming months. One other main consideration is the possibility of overlapping restrictions and violations to Ohio and Federal laws with medicinal marijuana users who have concealed carry permits. TAG will take action where necessary to combat this issue from a law enforcement standpoint.

**County Overdose Ratings:** On April 12, 2017, the Trumbull County Commissioners declared a state of emergency for the county due to the growing heroin epidemic affecting the quality of life of our residents. Trumbull County's seat of Warren has also been recently declared in a state of emergency by Warren City Council Members due to the overwhelming number of overdose deaths plaguing the city. According to the Trumbull County Department of Health, overdose statistics have continued to climb, with 54 fatalities noted in 2014, to 764 fatalities in 2018. TAG has not received any additional state or federal funding due to the state of emergency.

Unfortunately, the influx of not only heroin, but fentanyl and carfentanyl has been causing a spike in overdose deaths in our county. Toxicology reports provided to our task force by the Trumbull County Coroner's Office has also shown an increase in methamphetamine and cocaine deaths as well. Several users are reporting that they are mixing cocaine with their heroin, in an attempt to counteract the potential deadly effects of the opiates in their system. Oftentimes, this mixture will lead to their deaths. Trumbull County ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in the state of Ohio for the counties with the most overdose deaths.

In addition to the recent influx of heroin and prescription opiate trafficking and abuse, we have seen a significant rise in crystal meth and crack cocaine.

**Our Stats:** Below is a listing of the stats mentioned above over the past 3 years in Trumbull County for our task force.

Search Warrants: 2017: 7; 2018: 21; 2019: 39

Indictments: 2017: 53; 2018: 65; 2019: 148

**Drug Seizures:**

Opiates (including Heroin, Fentanyl and other): 2017: 503 grams; 2018: 3,805 grams; 2019: 1,387 grams

Crack/Cocaine: 2017: 94 grams; 2018: 1,657 grams; 2019: 5,261 grams

Meth: 2107: 99 grams; 2018: 979 grams; 2019: 1,917 grams

**The Impact of OCJS Funding on our Task Force:** Illegal drug use continues at epidemic levels not only in our local neighborhoods, but throughout the State of Ohio. Any reduction or loss of OCJS funding would severely impact our community and require us to reduce support staff and sworn personnel, meaning a reduction in drug investigations, drug seizures, arrests and prosecutions. Short term consequences would include the ability of local drug dealers to practice their occupation without any fear of getting caught. Long term consequences would have a more drastic impact with additional drug users and more citizens drug addicted, further degrading our communities.

There are many agencies that receive benefits from this task force in terms of funding for educational initiatives, drug awareness programming for communities and schools, awareness brochures and printed materials paid for by OCJS. TAG does not have the ability to fill any service gaps because those gaps exist in available detox centers and other low cost treatment facilities. We are maintaining the status quo with available funding, either through grants or local dollars, for additional law enforcement personnel does not exist.



**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

TAG is a multi-law enforcement agency and the methods that we use are clearly appropriate and the only "practice" for enforcement agencies; however, our county's drug problem is significantly larger than the local resources this unit has to address it. Those resources include trained experienced narcotics officers and funding to support operational expenses like wages and fringe benefits for support staff and undercover personnel, equipment, support expenses and confidential funds.

**Multi-jurisdictional task forces** are a "best practices" model for drug enforcement, functioning throughout the U.S. and are a cost effective and efficient approach. BJA has actually developed training to assist task forces in organizing, developing policy and procedures, personnel issues, informant and case management, undercover operations and risk assessment. Evidence of successful programs, similar to TAG, addressing the effects of police raids, drug hot spots, displacement and diffusion effects and their impact are addressed in Justice Quarterly 12(4). The positive effects of community based prevention programs dealing with high-risk adolescents are also addressed in the American Journal of Public Health 88(6). Other examples include Project Metro Town, a multi-jurisdictional partnership to reduce drug trafficking, RCMP, BC, Canada 2002 and Problem Solving approaches to drug enforcement, Kankakee, Illinois, 1998.

**Enforcement:** TAG recognizes that enforcement plays a vital role in addressing the problem in addition to collaboration with area treatment, prevention, education, business, community and faith based groups and government agencies to address "harm-demand reduction", and as a means of increasing our drug intelligence resources. Our nation's drug addiction issues are out of control and law enforcement must maintain a suitable level of continued drug awareness education to the public and make continuous arrests on traffickers and offenders.

**Our Participation in Community Drug Initiatives:** TAG has a leading role in our communities' "Opiate Abuse Task Force" and "Overdose Fatality Review Committee" to assist in planning community initiatives designed to address our drug and crime problem to include developing an overall drug and crime community strategy, which we developed in February 2014. We have teams and committees that address various parts of the strategy such as funding, joint prevention, education programs, prescription drug collections (with over 3,000 pounds of unused pills being turned in as a result of this program), with this being a community effort.

**The Problems:** The biggest problems facing the jurisdictions we serve is the link of local drug traffickers with larger drug cartels, the influx of opiates, crystal meth and crack cocaine into our neighborhoods from these local dealers, the increase of deaths of drug users overdoing on these products and strengthening our communities' awareness and recognition of the drug problem.



**Our Response:**

In response, TAG has strengthened our task force by recently teaming up with several local, state and federal law enforcement agencies in an attempt to better attack this problem. As a result of the growth of our task force, we have increased the quality of our investigations, disrupted larger drug trafficking rings than our task force had the ability to do in the past, increased the number of search warrants executed by our team, increased the number of dealers indicted within our county, strengthened our Intel of links to drug cartels with local street dealers and gangs, and had access to resources that allow us to investigate the flow of commodities and finances within the drug trafficking organizations.

In addition, TAG has improved our drug awareness programs, by talking at area schools and community groups approximately 25 times per year to increase the knowledge of current drug trends, recognizing symptoms of drug abusers, providing resources on area recovery and treatment centers, and helping to end the stigma placed upon those who use. TAG participates in many anti-drug events, where we disseminate information to the public on drug awareness, how to dispose of unused medications, reporting drug activity to our task force and strengthening the relationship of our citizens with law enforcement.

**SUSTAINABILITY/ACCOMPLISHMENTS/OBSTACLES**

**Sustainability:** With continued funding from OCJS, TAG will be able to sustain these action plans. If needed, TAG will adapt over time as necessary to address new drug trends within the county as they arise. In the event that OCJS funding is no longer available, TAG will request additional funding from our Subgrantee, the Trumbull County Commissioners. Currently, we receive their support in the form of funds for all expenses associated with maintaining and operating our building, some utilities, IT assistance, and some personnel costs. In the interim, in the event of a lack of OCJS funding, TAG would utilize monies from our forfeited funds, ensuring we expend only those funds critical to our operations. We would then take on a more proactive approach to the drug problems within our communities, by more strategic patrols and drug buys based on gathered Intel at the Task Force from our Intel Analyst.

TAG has worked with OTFCA to maximize our efforts at raising awareness over funding issues, such as the reduction in available Edward Byrne JAG dollars. Additionally, the Trumbull County Sheriff's Office (TCSO) is committed to the long-term success and sustainability of TAG.

**Accomplishments:** The most noteworthy accomplishment recently within the TAG Task Force is the new partnerships that have been formed with many local police departments spanning several jurisdictions throughout our county, including our County Seat of Warren City. Within the past year, seven police departments have formed and strengthened an alliance with our task force, offering resources such as part-time officers assigned to TAG, as well as shared intelligence. In addition, TAG has shared resources with those same departments, such as cell-phone data extraction tools, which have assisted in helping to solve fatal heroin overdose cases, as well as shared intelligence from our Intel Analyst, which has aided in identifying dealers and revealing important link-associations.

Other notable relationships formed with TAG recently are our close working relationships with the OSP, FBI, DEA, DHS and the U.S. Attorney General's Office. Full-time TCSO Officers have been assigned to the FBI Violent Crimes Task Force, DEA and ICE, and agents from the Youngstown FBI Office have been stationed full-time at the TAG Task Force Office in Warren, Ohio concentrating on drug enforcement in Trumbull County, as part of the FBI's "Safe Streets" Initiative. The USAG's Office has assigned an Intel Analyst one day per week to TAG to provide assistance to the FBI and the Safe Streets Initiative. In addition, the ATF has assigned an Agent to TAG to assist with special investigations. Our joint operation with OSP in 2019 "Operation Blue Light" proved to the Department of Public Safety that great partnerships with OSP and the local drug task force can achieve big goals in just a few days. These relationships have strengthened the effectiveness of TAG and led to the take -down of multiple high-level dealers and drug houses operating within our jurisdictions.

These relationships have greatly assisted TAG with successfully executing our mission and reaching our goals, such as an increased quality of drug investigations (including those on a larger monetary and geographic scale), an increased number of search warrants, and an

## 2019-Drug Law Application Narrative

increased number of indictments in our local judiciary system. Overall, TAG's successes have directly contributed to an increased quality of life within Trumbull County neighborhoods.

**Obstacles:** The main obstacle that our task force faces are the steady current trend of overdoses caused not only by heroin and opiate abuse, but also from an increasing amount of cocaine laced with fentanyl and the influx of crystal meth in our county. According to the Ohio Attorney General's Office BCI Quarterly Lab Drug Cases Report (Nov., 2019), Trumbull County is one of the highest reporting counties in the state with the number of fentanyl cases, heroin cases and cocaine cases. Trumbull County also ranks high in the number of meth cases reported.

TAG recognizes that heroin and other opioid abuse remains a state and nationwide epidemic, as the fentanyl trend poses a danger that was not as significant with other drug trends experienced in the past and there are many more recorded fatal overdoses with fentanyl-laced narcotics than with other types of street drugs in our communities. Trumbull County serves a direct line of transportation for fentanyl trafficking throughout the United States.

TAG is addressing this obstacle by maintaining relationships with not only other law enforcement agencies as stated above, but with local medical, educational (Kent State University, Trumbull Campus) and mental health facilities as well, in the form of collaboration and partnerships with the Trumbull County Opiate Abuse Task Force and the Trumbull County Overdose Fatality Review Committee. Through these partnerships, TAG contributes to strategic planning by providing a law enforcement perspective and plan of action with investigating and arresting local drug traffickers and abusers.

In addition, TAG and the Trumbull County Sheriff's Office have implemented an overdose response practice, which includes proper collection of evidence, seizures of cell phones and the interviewing by responding Officers of the overdose victim (if responsive), witnesses and family members. The Officers record the responses to their interview questions on an Overdose Response Form, which is then forwarded to TAG for further investigation. TAG's Intel Analyst uses this form to map the overdose on Ohio HIDTA's Overdose Mapping system and TAG's Officers use this form to run inquiries on dealer phone numbers. Since the implementation of this practice, TAG has identified several drug dealers within our communities and taken action through our partnerships with other local law enforcement agencies to bring them to justice. TAG will continue to stay current on Trumbull County overdose statistics and maintain partnerships to tackle this important issue.



**PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

**OBJECTIVE:** Maintain the number of street drug investigations made by the task force. This will be based off of a five-year calendar average.

**PERFORMANCE INDICATOR:** The number of street drug investigations made by the task force over 12 months.

**BASELINE NUMBER:** The average number of street drug investigations conducted by the task force over the past five years is 108. This will be the number of cases our task force aims to complete over a 12-month period.

**HOW WILL PERFORMANCE DATA BE COLLECTED?** Case files are maintained at the task force on all active investigations and these files are kept in Matrix, our records management system. These records are created by investigators and maintained by the Task Force Commander and staff. Files have details of charges, crime levels, identification of individuals and all facts and documents related to the case. Performance reports will be submitted to OCJS on a bi-annual basis by the Project Director covering performance related information.

**OBJECTIVE:** The TAG Task Force will increase by 5% the number of search warrants executed in the previous grant year.

**BASELINE NUMBER:** In 2018, TAG executed 21 search warrants in Trumbull County. Our goal for the 2018 calendar year will be 5% more than this baseline number, or a goal of at least 22 search warrants.

**HOW WILL PERFORMANCE DATA BE COLLECTED?** Search warrant data will be maintained in an Excel spreadsheet. Case records, including search warrant reports, are electronically stored on our file server and in Matrix, our records management system. These records are created by investigators and maintained by the Task Force Commander and staff. Performance reports will be submitted to OCJS by the Project Director covering performance related information.

**TIMELINE/ACTIVITIES**

**July 2020:** Task force activities performed daily/monthly include: Sworn investigators conduct drug investigations (controlled drug buys, surveillance, work with confidential sources, write search warrants, conduct drug raids, process and maintain evidence, write reports, etc.), complete reports, meet with prosecutors, and testifying in court by undercover officers. The Supervisor will oversee investigations, evaluate work product, provide grant management, drug education, etc. The intelligence analyst and administrative assistant will take drug tip information, provide investigative support, do fiscal and performance grant reporting, provide statistical reports, maintain task force website and FACEBOOK accounts, etc.; 15th-BJA Performance Report due-Responsible parties are Fiscal Officer and Project Director; 22nd-OCJS Statistical report submitted to OCJS for Lisa Shoaf-Responsible parties are Fiscal Officer and Project Director; 31st-OCJS quarterly fiscal report due-Responsible parties include Fiscal Officer and Project Director

**August 2020 (See July 2019):** Also conduct annual marijuana eradication efforts in Trumbull County

**September 2020:** mid-month-TAG Advisory Board Meeting-Responsible parties include Project Director and Advisory Board; mid-month-Prescription Pill Disposal Day in Trumbull County-Responsible parties are TAG and Opiate Task Force

**October 2020:** 15th-BJA Performance report submission-Responsible parties are Fiscal Officer and Project Director; 31st-OCJS quarterly fiscal report submission-Responsible parties are Fiscal Officer and Project Director

**November 2020 (See July 2020):** Also Review objectives to insure the projected outcome on track-Project Director

**December 2020:** mid-month-TAG Advisory Board Meeting-Responsible parties include Project Director and Advisory Board

**January 2021:** 15th-BJA Performance report submitted-Responsible parties are Fiscal Officer and Project Director; 31st-OCJS Quarterly Fiscal Report and Grant closeout paperwork/Equipment inventory submitted- Responsible parties are Fiscal Officer and Project Director

**February 2021:** mid-month-TAG Advisory Board meeting-Responsible parties are Project Director and Advisory Board-Review objectives to insure the projected outcome on track-Project Director

**March 2021 (See July 2020)**

2019-Drug Law Application Narrative

**April 2021:** 15th-BJA Performance report is submitted by Project Director and Fiscal Officer; 30th-OCJS Quarterly Fiscal report is submitted by Fiscal Officer and Project Director

**May 2021:** mid-month-TAG Advisory Board meeting-Responsible parties are Project Director and Advisory Board; TBD-Prescription Pill Disposal Day in Trumbull County-Responsible parties are TAG and Opiate Task Force

**June 2021 (See July 2020)**

\*TAG will attend and participate in substance abuse group (ASAP and Opiate Task Force) meetings the 3rd Tuesday of every month and attend other community initiatives.

\*TAG will insure deliverables are met on a monthly basis to include: the number of new investigations each month and the number of search warrants executed by our task force.



### ORGANIZATION CAPACITY

TAG was formed in 2003 by the Sheriffs in three counties (Trumbull, Ashtabula and Geauga) to improve communications on crime and as a means of saving administrative costs because of reductions in Byrne grant funding. We remained a three county task force until 2008 when Geauga County broke away because of an office location change to Warren, Ohio and in 2019 when Ashtabula County broke away due to budget constraints in their county.

The task force commenced in a 900 sq. ft. facility with one supervisor, five investigators and an administrative assistant. In 2008, we moved to a 3,000 sq. ft. facility, with one supervisor, seven investigators, one full-time intelligence analyst, and one administrative assistant. In 2014, we relocated again to a new, over 20,000 sq.' building, designed specifically to house our task force and the Trumbull County Emergency Management Agency. This facility is equipped with a specially ventilated and humidity controlled evidence room, is alarmed and surveillance protected, includes a garage for all undercover vehicles, a technology room to house all of our equipment and significant office space for potential growth.

Currently, our task force is staffed with one supervisor, six full-time investigators and nine part-time investigators, with a median of 20 years' experience in narcotics investigations and all receive annual training in narcotics enforcement and related education. Recently, several local police departments have expressed their plans of assigning additional part-time investigators to our task force, allowing us to bring our goal of expanding closer to fruition.

Our Project Director is Chief Deputy Joseph Dragovich, who is employed by the Trumbull County Sheriff's Office. Chief Dragovich possesses 27 years of law enforcement experience with the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP). Chief Dragovich has received several promotions in response to his excellent quality of work over the years, encompassing the positions of OSHP Trooper, Assistant Post Commander, Post Commander, Lieutenant and Staff Lieutenant. Dragovich's design and implementation of several innovative programs at OSHP achieved crash reduction, educational and enforcement goals.

Our Commander is Captain Tony Villanueva, who is employed by the Trumbull County Sheriff's Office (TCSO). Captain Villanueva possesses over 15 years of law enforcement experience, including 9 years as a Narcotics Agent, including in an undercover capacity, with 5 of those years worked through the TAG Task Force as assigned by the Howland Township Police Department and 3 of those worked through the McDonald Township Police Department. Throughout his career, Villanueva has deterred several narcotic traffickers, halted area human trafficking rings and solved high profile homicide and cold cases. Captain Villanueva also obtained his Master Criminal Investigators certification through OPOTA in 2013.

The Subgrantee is the Trumbull County Commissioners and they have been the subgrantee since TAG's inception. The Commissioners have been extremely supportive of this initiative and lend us assistance from the county's data department for computer and software support, as well as our network. Additionally, we are supported by the Trumbull County Auditor's Office

2019-Drug Law Application Narrative

through which our bills are paid. Once grants are awarded, funding appropriations are approved by the County Commissioners and funds are set up with the County Auditor. Our funds are audited annually.

The Implementing Agency is the Trumbull County Sheriff's Office. They have been the implementing agency since TAG's inception. The mission of the Sheriff's office is to protect and serve" the citizens of Trumbull County. The Trumbull County Sheriff serves on the task force advisory board to insure that the task force meets overall objectives and is responsible for determining the task force's overall mission statement.

C.R. is our full-time Intelligence Analyst and Administrative Assistant, with 10 years' experience on our team. C.R. reviews all calls for service in our region, evaluates the information and shares it with investigators. She searches databases to assist investigators and provides statistical data and charts to assist with investigation and prosecution. C.R. also maintains drug statistics related to seizures and drug tip information so it can be shared with the Commander. She produces a variety of promotional brochures to assist the task force with educational awareness on drugs. C.R. assists in maintaining the fiscal portion of the grant and performance statistics, assists investigators with compiling case files, investigative information, receiving drug tips, and maintains the task force website and FaceBook page.

TAG has adequate technology available to assist investigators in the performance of their duties and uses grant funds and project income to stay current with today's criminals. The quality and experience of personnel, the support of other county agencies for this initiative and the partnerships we have established with prevention and treatment agencies assures successful completion of this project.



COLLABORATION BOARD

TAG utilizes an Advisory Board to manage our goals and objectives. The Advisory Board consists of representatives from the Trumbull County Sheriff's and Prosecutor's Offices, as well as the Ohio Department of Public Safety. The Advisory Board meets on a quarterly basis and operates off an agenda prepared by the Project Director. From the agenda, minutes are taken and any discussions are noted within the minutes. The agenda is printed and emailed to the Board prior to the meetings. After the meeting, additions to the agenda and completed minutes are emailed to all members. Completed minutes are then reviewed and approved at the next quarterly meeting. Final approved meeting minutes are placed in the grant book for future review/audit. Our Advisory Board meetings are held in February, May, September and December. Besides the quarterly meetings, we also meet as needed to discuss other issues. The Project Director communicates with Advisory Board members on a weekly basis to insure they are updated on task force investigative issues.

TAG does participate in community association boards where they are integral to the task force mission. These groups include the representatives from law enforcement, education/prevention, treatment agencies, physicians, community leaders and the general public. Programs and initiative developed as a result of these boards include: Operation Empty Medicine Cabinet, Lock Your Medicines, Community Drug/Crime Strategy (2/2014), drug education classes, Hidden in Plain Sight, There is help, There is hope, and opiate town hall meetings. These meetings are held monthly at the Trumbull County Mental Health and Recovery Board (TCMHRB) offices. The TCMHRB manages the meetings and are responsible for starting ASAP and the Opiate Abuse Task Force. An agenda is prepared and minutes are kept of the discussions at these meetings by Lauren Thorp. Community organizations that participate in these substance abuse boards are the TCMHRB, Community Solutions, Family and Child First Council, Valley Counseling, Glenbeigh, Trumbull County Commissioners, Warren and Trumbull County Health Departments, Neil Kennedy Recovery Clinic, Prevention Partners Plus, Solace of the Valley, Trumbull County Medical Society Alliance, Trumbull County Coroner, Area Agency on Aging, New Start Treatment Center, and many other community organizations. These boards also have several recovering addicts that participate regularly and physicians participate occasionally.

The Advisory Board discusses and implements various programs that are beneficial to our communities and helpful in reducing drug abuse. Depending upon the program or idea, a project leader is determined and a sub-committee is created to coordinate a response effort. An example of the assistance rendered is "Operation Empty Medicine Cabinet". Members of the created subcommittee assist law enforcement by identifying prescription medicines turned in for disposal. Law Enforcement collects and counts pills and types of medicines and numbers are recorded on a spreadsheet for later reporting. TAG's collaborative efforts have also assisted our communities through partner agency donations of NARCAN for our implementing agency and joint community drug education efforts.



**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Purpose Statement:** The TAG Law Enforcement Task Force is a multi-jurisdictional task force that addresses narcotics, firearm, gang related and other major crimes in Trumbull County. The purpose of this project is to reduce the impact of those crimes on our communities along w/pharmaceutical diversion, terrorism and other organized criminal activity. By reducing the impact of drug crimes we should improve the health and safety of Ohioans.

TAG's success comes only through strong collaboration with federal and state law enforcement partners and treatment agencies. TAG targets criminal offenders in Trumbull County with a total population of 210,312 citizens and a total land area of 637 sq. miles. TAG will accomplish its mission by enforcing Ohio's laws and federal statutes, specifically drug laws by conducting covert and overt investigations of drug, gun and gang offenders with partner agencies.

This project is important to insure that our communities do not become overrun with drugs. The funding from this project supports our investigative efforts. Our task force is designed to assist other agencies that can't afford to put resources (personnel) toward a specific crime problem (drugs and other organized crime) and also to maintain equipment and technology that will assist in criminal investigations that smaller agencies cannot afford to support. Additionally, it is TAG's collective efforts that assist other community organizations, charged with reducing substance abuse, as we partner with them to conduct community and school drug education and other projects identified in our project description. We support the use of NARCAN and educate other departments in proper NARCAN administration procedures.

**Problem Statement:**

**Overall Quality of Life Factors:** Trumbull County ranks as one of the lowest counties in Ohio for overall length and quality of life. Among the most influential attributing factors in this ranking, is our county's heavy opiate and other narcotic abuse, which, as you know, causes a snowball of other problems such as declining health and premature deaths (infectious disease and fatal overdoses), increased unemployment (falling into a life of poverty) and crimes acted out by those who use. These factors affect those who use, their families and ultimately degrade the society of our community as a whole.

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2019-Drug Law Application Narrative

**Project Description:** Multi-jurisdictional task forces are a "best practices" model for drug enforcement and are in operation across the United States. Collaborative efforts among federal, state and local law enforcement and area substance abuse prevention, education and treatment organizations are today's answer for addressing community drug and crime problems. Because TAG is an enforcement agency, our specific tasks involve enforcing Ohio's laws and federal statutes dealing with narcotics so we will target individuals dealing drugs in our communities by purchasing controlled substances, executing search warrants, arresting and assisting in the prosecution of these offenders. Additionally, we will seize illegal assets, collaborate w/education and prevention agencies, provide community drug education, conduct community prescription drug disposals, empty local drop boxes and utilize "out of the box" methods to remove drugs from our communities. We have taken a leading role in training law enforcement to understand addiction.

TAG has been in existence as a multi-jurisdictional special crimes unit since 2003. We continue to grow because of our collaborative efforts and support from the prevention community and the support we receive from our county government and participating agencies. TAG participates in the OTFCA as a means of collaborating on "best practices", drug trends and investigations.

**PARTICIPATING AGENCIES/COLLABORATION**

The following agencies have existing collaborative working relationships with our Task Force. Trumbull County Sheriff's Office, Trumbull County Prosecutor's Office, Federal Bureau of Investigations, Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Youngstown and Cleveland Offices, Drug Enforcement Agency of Youngstown, Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation, Ohio State Board of Pharmacy, Ohio State Highway Patrol, Nile's Police, Warren City Police, Hartford Police, Weathersfield Police, Hubbard Township Police, Cortland Police, Brookfield Township Police, Newton Falls Police, Geneva Police, Ashtabula City Police, U.S. Marshall's Office, Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention, Ohio Department of Homeland Security, United States Coast Guard, Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation, Ohio Medical, Nursing and Dental Boards, Trumbull County Coroner's Office, Community Solutions, Trumbull County Mental Health and Recovery Board/Opiate Task Force and the U.S. Attorney General's Office.